2: Redfield & Villa Rojas E-4,5 (1936) 1939 MV: Tzeltal MV9

As is the case in the highlands of Guatemala, the outstanding social unit, corresponding to a tribe, is the population of several hundred or several thousand Indians whose activities center in one leading settlement from which the community gets its name. As in Guatemala, these communities vary greatly with respect to the proportion of Indians living permanently in this central settlement. Dr. Tax[1] uses the phrase "town nucleus type" for Guatemalan Indian communities in which all or a large majority of the Indians live in the principal settlement, and the phrase "vacant town type" for those in which most of the Indians live in scattered rural habitations, coming to the town center occasionally for commercial, governmental, or festal reasons. Among the Tzeltals the town-nucleus type is less atypical than it is in Guatemala, and the town-nucleus communities are suffering from a scarcity of land. The following communities may be regarded as of this type: Amatenango, San Martin, Tenango, Sivacá, Petalcingo, and probably also Chanal and Citalá, although at least in the case of the last two, there are also considerable numbers of Indians dwelling in the countryside. The vacant-town type of community is represented by Cancuc, Oxchuc, Bachajón, and Chilón. It will be seen that both types are represented in both highlands and lowlands. With respect to this classification Tenejapa, Guaquitepec, and Yajalon are intermediate, and illustrate Tax's "Type III" in that many of the people live in the town and work their fields closely surrounding it, while many live on their farms and only occasionally come to town.

As in the highlands of Guatemala, the ethnic distinction between Indian and Ladino is marked, here also the Ladinos are much outnumbered by the Indians, and here too the Ladinos are very predominately town-dwellers. In Chilón and Yajalon the permanent town-dwellers are chiefly Ladinos; the permanent population of Oxchuc consists of about seventy Ladino families, the several thousand Indians live about the town and in the country. In other towns (Tenejapa,[2] Citalá, Guaquitepec, and Petalcingo) a considerable number of Ladino families have become established, although in these communities there are more Indians even among the inhabitants of the town itself than there are Ladinos. A general disposition to exclude Ladinos from permanent settlement in Indian communities is most marked in Cancuc, the site of the uprising of 1712,[3] and where in 1935 some Ladino merchants were slain by the Indians. No Ladinos reside there now. In Amatenango, Chanal, Bachajón, San Martin, Tenango, and Sivacá the Indians are also unfavorable to settlement by Ladinos; in each of the three last-named villages the only Ladino residents are the school-teacher and the government-imposed municipal agent. Recently a few Ladino tradespeople have settled in Bachajón, and a "Center of Native Education" has been established there (as also at Amatenango) by the Mexican national government. In the lowland towns of

[1] Tax, 1937, pp. 423–444.

[2] It is interesting that in Tenejapa, where both Indians and Ladinos live in town, the two groups recognize different patron saints and there are separate schools for Indians and for Ladinos, whereas in Oxchuc, where all the Indians live outside the town, the same santos are worshipped by both groups, but the Ladinos maintain their own celebration on the days of the festival.

[3] Vicente Pineda, 1888.